

State of Maine
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Testimony of Edmond Morin, Chair of the Career and Technical Education Committee
of
The Maine State Board of Education
Regarding LD 972: An Act to Change the Entity Responsible for Operating the Career
And Technical Education Center in Machias to Regional School Unit 37

Sponsored by: Representative Strout
Date: May 5, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Edmond Morin, Career and Technical Education Chair for the Maine State Board of Education. In addition to facilitating the dispersal of federal Career and Technical Education money, the CTE Committee actively supports Career and Technical Education in Maine which is taught in 27 CTE Centers and Regions across the State. On behalf of the State Board of Education I am testifying Neither for Nor Against LD 972: An Act to Change the Entity Responsible for Operating the Career and Technical Education Center in Machias to Regional School Unit 37.

CTE programs have been offered at Machias High School for many years but most of the programs offered through Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology take place at a facility in Columbia. Online CWCIT is described as being part of MSAD 37. From what we understand several years ago MSAD 37 received a \$2 Million dollar state grant to purchase and renovate a former supermarket in Columbia and began offering Career and Technical Education programs there. The building, which was considered to be centrally located, is owned by RSU 37 which pays expenses, including for teachers.

Administratively CTE Centers are associated with high schools under the overall leadership of that school's superintendent. A difficulty faced by the Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology stems from questions about financial control which is now in the hands of the Superintendent in Machias.

This has led to confusion and some rather unfortunate difficulties, having cost CWCIT state money to put an addition onto the building in Columbia and funds to pay for vans used to transport students to job sites especially health care students to clinics.

The Maine State Board of Education greatly admires Maine's public school Superintendents and CTE Directors and has no desire to get in the middle of discussions about who should be the fiscal agent for CWCIT.

But one wonders if the way to go about selecting the fiscal agent for CWCIT should be done by legislation.

There are two places in Title 20-A which may be applicable in this situation. Section 405-I, among Powers and Duties of the State Board of Education, is to “act upon applications to alter the delivery of career and technical education within career and technical education regions and center areas.” Section 8307-A sets forth reorganization procedures for CTE’s including presenting a multi-element reorganization plan to the state board of education for its approval. Among the items in the plan are describing the deficiencies in the current method of providing career and technical education, presenting an alternative organizational method, presenting a method for assigning title to and obligations for property and indebtedness respectively of any region or center affected by a reorganization plan. The statute also provides for an assessment by the Commissioner and local voter approval.

So, the question posed by the State Board of Education is whether parties involved in this matter should proceed with this legislation or should they prepare a plan that can be submitted to the board. In which ever a way this is resolved we would like to see a structure that administers funds in the most efficient and logical manner for all programs that are offered with the hope of increasing that number with no loss of funding or opportunity for the students of coastal Washington County.